

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Status Of The Claims

This is an Amendment and Reply to the Office Action mailed May 27, 2008, in which the following rejections were set forth: Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement; and Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO-02-053482 (“WO ‘482”) in view of *Sagane*.

By this response, Claim 1 has been amended and no claims have been added or canceled. As such, Claims 1 and 2 are pending and reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

§ 112 Claim Rejections

Applicant has amended Claim 1 to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention. More specifically, Claim 1 has been amended to include “a gear unit” utilized to hingedly couple the at least one swivel to the running gear. Support for the amendment can be found throughout the specification as originally filed; most notably at paragraph [0035] of the published patent application. As such, no new matter has been added.

The Examiner contends that the originally filed specification fails to teach that the at least one swivel arm is hingedly coupled to the running gear. This feature however is disclosed in paragraph [0035] of the published patent application. That is, each swivel arm 50, 51 is connected to the output shaft of a gear unit 54, 55; wherein each gear unit 54, 55 in turn is fastened to the respective longitudinal tie-bar 7, 8 of the feed carriage 5. Furthermore, each swivel arm 50, 51 is capable of swiveling in a vertical plane extended parallel to the feed direction. See paragraph [0034]. It therefore follows that each swivel arm 50, 51 compellingly has to be handedly connected to the running gear 7, 8, 9 to 12. Applicant therefore asserts that one of ordinary skill in the art can readily derive that each swivel arm 50, 51 is at least indirectly connected to a running gear 7, 8, 9 to 12. Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that the specification as originally filed discloses that the at least one swivel arm is hingedly connected to the running gear.

As such, amended Claim 1—as well as Claim 2, which is dependent thereon—is respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance and the Applicant requests that the rejection of the claims be withdrawn.

§ 103(a) Claim Rejections

Applicant agrees with the Examiner that *WO '482* fails to teach a dripping zone that is arranged downstream of the bath and a dryer, which are disposed downstream of the dripping zone. The Examiner further states however, that it would be obvious to modify the device as disclosed in *WO '482* and to add a dripping zone downstream of the last bath as well as to add a dryer that is disposed downstream of the dripping zone wherein the articles may be tilted akin to that of Applicant's Claim 1. The Examiner further contends that *Sagane* discloses a dripping zone or at least a space downstream of the bath in which articles may be tilted in such a way that coating material can drip from the articles. And still further, the Examiner contends that *Sagane* discloses a dryer downstream of the dripping zone that allows the article to be coated with different coating materials, without cross-contamination between adjacent coating stations.

Support for the Examiner's contentions cannot be found within the relied upon prior art by the Applicant, but perhaps such support purportedly appears in the Office Action mailed June 19, 2007 wherein the Examiner referred to Figure 8 of *Sagane* and identified a dripping zone downstream of the last bath and a dryer 12 downstream of a dripping zone. Paragraph [0008] of *Sagane* however indicates that the stations 9 and 10, which are arranged downstream of the bath 20 of the station 8, are washing stations. And the following station 11 (see Figure 1 of *Sagane*) is also a washing station in which the article to be treated is washed with pure water. Furthermore, according to paragraph [0081] of *Sagane*, the stations 8, 9, 10, and 11 are followed by a station 12, in which the article to be treated is pre-dried before it is conveyed to a drying furnace. As such, *Sagane*, fails to disclose a dripping zone downstream of the bath 20. Applicant therefore asserts that *Sagane's* "drier 12" is not disposed downstream of the dripping zone as required in Applicant's amended Claim 1.

Moreover, neither *WO '482* nor *Sagane* suggests their respective modification to dispose a dripping zone downstream of the last bath. That is, in *WO '482*, a transfer station is disposed at the end of the painting device— i.e., downstream of the last bath 3 of *WO '482*—in which vehicle bodies 4 are taken from a stationary feed carriage 5. See *WO '428*, paragraphs [0012]-[0013]. With respect to *Sagane*, the washing stations 9, 10, and 11 are disposed adjacent to the

last bath 20. As such, a dripping zone according to Applicant's amended Claim 1 would not be utilized in *Sagane*'s conveyance apparatus.

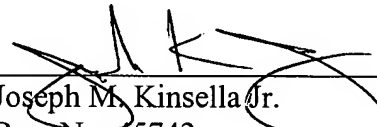
Because *WO '482* and *Sagane*—alone or in combination—fail to disclose or suggest Applicant's amended independent Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the relied upon prior art. For at least the same reasoning that amended Claim 1 is patentable over the cited references, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 2—which depends directly on Claim 1—is also in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and requests that the claims be allowed to issue. Applicant believes that no additional fees are required with this correspondence; however if any additional fees are required, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from Deposit Account No. 50-0545.

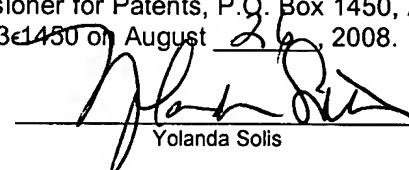
Respectfully submitted,

Dated: August 26, 2008


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